Silvicultural Systems Program
NOTES TO THE FIELD
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PARTIAL CUTTING SOLUTIONS WORKSHOPS

During the summer and fall of 2000, a series of partial cutting workshops were held in six forest districts—Robson Valley, Penticton, Dawson Creek, Kalum, Prince George and Bulkley/Cassiar. The intent of the workshops was to increase the awareness and use of partial cutting as a viable silvicultural option for meeting a wide range of timber and non-timber objectives.

The workshops were designed to be issue-specific and solution-based. Regions were invited to survey districts for outstanding issues, challenges or problems that could be addressed by partial cutting. In addition to identifying potential partial cutting issues, district staff also selected suitable field sites where the issues or challenges were highlighted in real-life situations.

To ensure a *focused* workshop, participants were generally pre-selected and limited to individuals directly involved with the issue being addressed. Participants included Ministry of Forests staff; Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks staff; licensees; academics; private consultants; and other stakeholders (e.g., First Nations, local councils, Department of Fisheries and Oceans).

"This workshop was timely and very useful. We need to do more partial cutting out here, and the workshop provided good examples of how to do it.

~ BC Environment participant

Smithers Community Forest Demonstration Area – Workshop participants discussing the shelterwood system in background.

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Partial Cutting Solutions Workshops were held in six forest districts during 2000.

Each workshop was geared to finding solutions for the issue or challenge identified by the participating district. The workshops were spread over two days, where approximately one-third of the time was spent in the classroom and two-thirds in the field.

The workshops were jointly facilitated by forestry consultants with a background in partial cutting and representatives from the Forest Practices Branch. To begin each workshop, the facilitators reviewed the identified partial cutting issues with the participants to help focus the group and ensure the issues were well understood and valid. The facilitators also delivered small informational lectures pertaining directly to the partial cutting issues being addressed by the group. Additional reference material on partial cutting was provided to all participants in the form of a workbook.

Following the initial office session where the content and framework of the workshop was outlined, participants went into the field to examine actual cutblocks that highlighted the partial cutting issues under discussion. Participants broke into small groups to brainstorm and propose potential options/solutions for resolving the site-specific issues at each field site.

Upon returning to the classroom, the groups actively discussed their findings from the field tour, and summarized their management recommendations to present them to the rest of the workshop participants. Recommendations from all the groups were collectively reviewed and further discussed to come up with a list of options for resolving the identified issues/challenges. This often resulted in an open and sometimes vigorous dialogue among the participants.

The diverse background of the workshop participants provided for a lively exchange of new ideas and different viewpoints, which greatly enhanced the educational and training components of the workshops. This wealth of knowledge and familiarity with the issues also played a significant role in the ability of the participants to come up with workable solutions to some difficult forest management issues using partial cutting. During the field sessions, participants were able to gain valuable practical experience in applying partial cutting systems within a group setting.

"This type of workshop is site-specific and issue directed," comments Leisbet Beaudry, forestry consultant for the workshops held in the Prince George, Dawson Creek and Bulkley/Cassiar forest districts. "This allows us to focus on issues that are relevant to individual districts and the forest ecosystems they work in. In particular, this format is well suited to addressing local concerns, since forestry issues are often quite different around the province."

Bryce Bancroft and Ken Zielke, forestry consultants for the workshops held in the Robson Valley, Penticton and Kalum forest districts, see the workshops as "an effective way of getting the ball

rolling for achieving on-the-ground solutions to existing local issues—a helpful jump start to the process."

The results-based nature of the workshops, combined with the focus on district-specific issues, helped to promote a higher degree of participation by those attending the workshops. This increased 'buy in' seemed to promote better learning and facilitate the training process, so that participants were able to maximize the benefits of the experience.

Mel Scott and John Harkema, Forest Practices Branch representatives who co-facilitated the workshops with the forestry consultants, were very pleased with the participation levels of the workshops. "I'm encouraged by the success of these partial cutting workshops, especially by how well they were received," says Mel Scott. John Harkema is also enthusiastic. "I think these 'working workshops' will go a long way towards encouraging the broader use of partial cutting," he adds.

"This workshop provided a lot of good information that we can use to implement the partial cutting program. I hope in the near future, you can set up another partial cutting workshop in our district."

~ Forest Service participant

The next logical step is to follow up with the participating districts to see how the recommendations that came out of the workshops were utilized in an operational setting. Forest Practices Branch is in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of the workshops and identifying any areas that need improvement. This evaluation process will also help identify gaps in existing partial cutting training or additional training needs for local stakeholders.

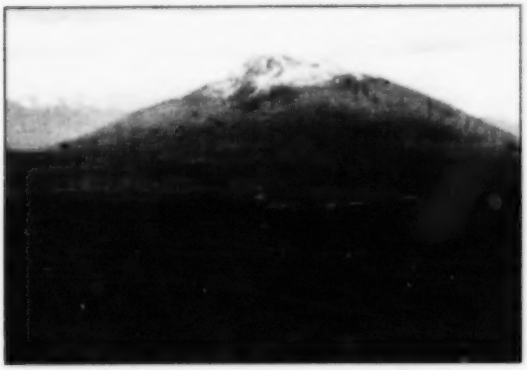
The successful format of the partial cutting workshops could easily be applied to training for other operational applications, such as forest health, windthrow or bio-diversity management. The key is to develop the training material around issues that are relevant to the district where the training is being delivered, and ensure that participants include a balanced mix of stakeholders directly associated with the workshop topic.

Workshop participants measuring incremental growth in regeneration.

"There were several things I liked about this workshop. The facilitators were able to adapt the workshop to the needs of the audience. They also provided a provincial perspective to some of the local issues being addressed, which I found very helpful. The hands-on portion of the workshop was great."

~ Forestry consultant participant

For more information, or a summary of any of the partial cutting workshops held in 2000, please contact Mel Scott at Mel.Scott@gems4.gov.bc.ca or John Harkema at John.Harkema@gems3.gov.bc.ca.



Canoe Mountain near Valemount – visual quality concerns associated with proposed gondola and recreation trails.

"This was a very good workshop with the right mix of people. We were able to address issues that we deal with on a daily basis and come up with solutions that will work in the field. The facilitators had lots of experience and were very knowledgeable."

~ Forest industry participant

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